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ABSTRACT

In response to dramatic enrollment declines between 1991 and 1996, 19 division deans at Indiana's Vincennes University (VU) implemented the Pathways Project to renew their role as campus leaders and address the causes of the enrollment decline. In the project's first year, considerable success was achieved in involving over 100 faculty in five improvement projects. Subsequently, administrative reorganization at VU and the placement of the marketing and admissions departments in the Instructional Services division have led to systemic planning in enrollment management and more decentralized decision-making. Progress has also continued in the following five projects: (1) strengthening the relationship between VU and other secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, including the implementation of a one day workshop for high school counselors to review new career clusters and educational requirements; (2) increasing recruitment and retention efforts, including the development of proposals for state-wide marketing research projects as well as a comprehensive plan for retention efforts; (3) enhancing the delivery of instruction and services, including the revision of VU's advising manual; (4) developing enterprise and entrepreneurial projects, including the development of a Learning Center located nearly 300 miles from campus; and (5) enhancing the professional development of faculty and staff, involving the delivery of 15 specialized inservice workshops to over 185 faculty and staff. (HAA)

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SOME PEOPLE MAKE THINGS HAPPEN, SOME WATCH THINGS HAPPEN, WHILE OTHERS SIT AROUND AND WONDER WHAT HAPPENED:

AN UPDATE

By

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Phillip E. Pierpont, Ph.D.

Dr. Phillip E. Pierpont earned his BA from Loyal College, Baltimore, and his MA from the University of Scranton -- both Jesuit colleges of the Eastern Province. In 1966, he migrated to the Midwest to begin his Ph. D. studies, which were completed in 1972 with approval of his dissertation on the 17th Century American poet Edward Taylor. In 1971, he began an Assistant Professorship at Vincennes University, "the oldest college west of the Alleghenies and north of the Ohio River" and, at that time, Indiana's only comprehensive community college. In 1976, he became Division Chair of the Humanities Division, since renamed as Dean of the Humanities Division. Along the way, he also coordinated and taught in the University's prison program at the maximum security federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana. He also has chaired the English Department. Dr. Pierpont has served on several state-level committees and currently is the Co-Chair of the statewide "Faculty Development Committee" of the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education.

Mike Davis, A.C.S.W., C.C.S.W.

Mike Davis was appointed to the position of Associate Vice President for Instruction and Enrollment Management in January, 1996. Prior to his present position, from 1990-1995 he served as Dean of the Social Science Division at Vincennes University (Community College). He formerly served as Chair of the Sociology/Social Work Department at the same institution from 1982 - 1990. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Evansville, and a Master of Science in Social Work from the University of Louisville. An active member and leader of numerous community, state, and professional organizations, he has also worked in community mental health centers, private agencies, and private clinical practice. He has been a participant on the Committee on Inquiry (Ethics Committee) for the Indiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers since 1987 and has served as chair of that committee for the past three years. He is currently teaching a course entitled, Ethics for the Helping Professions. He also teaches Social Problems. He is presently a doctoral student in the Nova Southeastern University's Programs in Higher Education.

**SOME PEOPLE MAKE THINGS HAPPEN, SOME WATCH THINGS HAPPEN,
WHILE OTHERS
SIT AROUND AND WONDER WHAT HAPPENED: AN UPDATE**

When we presented our initial paper on this topic last year, we had been riding a 20 year enrollment improvement wave from 1971 to 1991 that had seen our enrollment grow from fewer than 1900 FTE's on the main campus to more than 6565 FTE's at the main campus and four approved sites: Jasper, IN; Indianapolis Airport; the Indiana Deaf School at Indianapolis; and the US Military payroll Center at Fort Benjamin Harrison. In the five years that followed through Spring 1996, we lost approximately 1200 FTE's -- nearly 20% of our enrollment -- and seemed to be dying by degrees through an inability to move "the powers" to act. At that point, our Division Deans formed their own ad hoc working group and formulated what we came to call our "Pathways Projects." The momentum and the accomplishments of that effort were the basis of last year's paper: we had impacted the very organization of the college, seemed to have forced the issues in the areas of enrollment management, marketing, market research, academic advising, retention planning, and other areas.

Since last year, the "Pathways" organization lost centerstage to: the need to reply to a serious North Central challenge in the areas of Governance and General Education; the full establishment of a new "site" in Elkhart, IN, in conjunction with Indiana Vocational State College and the Indiana University, South Bend campus; the change of the Jasper, IN "site" to a "campus" status; and the great energy generated by the organizational change that occurred just before we presented last year's paper: the appointment of Mike Davis as Associate Vice President for Instruction and Enrollment Management. That appointment led to the removal of Marketing from Presidential Services and of Admissions from Student Services to Mike's oversight -- both now firmly planted in Instructional Services. The most obvious fruit of that -- for us, cataclysmic -- set of changes has been systemic planning in the area of enrollment management and the shift away from a tightly controlled, highly centralized decision-making process that emanated from the "top down." Consequent to those reorganizational changes, we hired the Noel-Levitz Corporation as consultants, and they helped to direct the outflow of energy directed toward formulating a system-wide enrollment management plan with input from every area of the college: each area, whether the Bursar or the Music Department, was required to put on paper how it felt it could contribute to the reversal of our enrollment slide. Those efforts have ranged from the creation of a new set of sequential mailings -- not just scattershotting letters on a massive scale to every student that walked and breathed -- that targets students who "inquire"

and whose inquiries set in motion a "sequence" of letters designed to convert the inquirer to an applicant to the recent decision to reassign one of our most energetic and effective Division Deans, Dr. Norman Merrifield, to give specific leadership to a Retention effort that will involve such areas as reshaping our on-campus Summer Orientation and mini-orientations just before the beginning of school each Fall; improving academic advising; perhaps reassigning of a few key faculty members from the "Pathways" efforts to assist in the retention effort, and other areas of responsibility that are evolving naturally from the Retention effort.

Another change that may also prove to be cataclysmic -- Vincennes University, Vincennes Indiana is beginning to resemble earthquaked and aftershocked California -- has been the opening of the door to a major reorganization of the upper echelon -- the Vice Presidents' row -- of the administration and also to a potential reshaping of the on- and off-campus instructional divisions to as few as five on-campus instructional divisions (from the current eight) and the off-campus areas from five distinct areas to only two (or three at most). As a corollary of the reorganization of the on-campus divisions will be the possible combining of the 60 on-campus instructional departments into functionally defined "clusters" that will include 10+ FTE faculty (involving a head to "chair" the new cluster/department and retaining most of the existing department and program coordinators within the cluster to manage the issues unique to their programs. The outcome will be an increase in the use of released time for the (newly assigned/possibly elected) chair of the cluster or newly titled department. For example, one model under consideration combines several small liberal arts areas, with individual FTE's ranging from 1.2 to 5, into a new "Liberal Arts Cluster" that will have 15+ FTE's and no less than 20% percent released time for the Cluster's chair: a significant increase since none of the current chairs or coordinators has released time for his/her role, only the payment of a $500-$1000 per year stipend. The chairs and coordinators will retain their stipends and perhaps that of the cluster chair will increase beyond the current norm of $1000 for all departments greater than 10+ annualized FTE members. It's quite possible that the reorganization of the teaching divisions will result in units ranging from a low of perhaps 40 full-time continuing members (and more than 40 FTE faculty) to a high of 83-4 full-time, continuing faculty (90+ FTE) faculty members. At the time we prepared our text this effort was only into its second level of discussion -- one leading to the preparation of three or so models to be presented to the faculty for discussion and reshaping.

The Process

The momentum behind these significant changes was the result of a decision to send 19 deans and department chairs from Vincennes University to the Fourth Annual International Conference for Chairs, Deans, and other

Organizational Leaders, sponsored by The Chair Academy, in February, 1995. Deans and department chairs had become subsumed with managerial responsibilities, thus restricting their ability to focus on strategic long-term planning and development of initiatives. Attending the conference in February, 1995, re-energized the participants and served as a springboard for developing a multi-faceted planning document later that spring. From this planning document was born the Pathways Project over the summer of 1995. In the fall of that year, over 100 faculty and staff became involved in five different project areas that are described below, along with the results of each activity. These groups met on a regular basis, often at 7:00 a.m. to conduct their business. An average of one FTE faculty position in terms of released time was provided to each of the eight divisions to allow faculty time to devote to these projects. A total cost to the institution for this released time was estimated at $360,000.

1) Strengthening the relationship between secondary and other post-secondary educational settings and Vincennes University. This group developed a one day workshop for high school counselors to review new career clusters and educational requirements designed by the Department of Education for the State of Indiana.

2) Increasing recruitment and retention efforts. This group developed proposals for a state-wide marketing research project as well as a comprehensive plan for retention efforts. As a result of this group's activities, a position of Dean of Retention and Special Projects was created and filled in the Fall, 1996. The group also developed a one-stop advising and registration process for adult students.

3) Enhancing our current delivery of instruction and services. This group developed a revised advising manual and conducted two workshops in the Spring of 1996 for advisors. In two divisions, special pilot projects were conducted of intensive advising for high risk students. At least one of these projects was further refined and continued during the Fall of 1996.

4) Developing enterprise and entrepreneurial projects. This group assisted with the development of a Learning Center in Elkhart, IN, nearly 300 miles from the main campus. Distance education courses were offered via PictureTel and on-site at many industries in one of the most rapidly growing segments of the state.

5) Enhancing the professional development of existing faculty/staff. This group developed and delivered over 15 specialized inservices during the last two weeks of the spring semester to over 185 faculty and staff. One of the more popular workshops was conducted by faculty from various departments who had been highly successful in recruitment activities. This workshop was so popular and timely that it was repeated again at the

beginning of the Fall, 1996, term and became the focus of a University-wide meeting in October, 1996. Another outgrowth of the success of this group was a decision to revamp the University's professional development meetings for the 1996-97 academic year. A campus wide committee was appointed and instead of having separate meetings for faculty and staff, combined meetings are now held every other month at different time slots to allow all employees to attend at least one of the sessions.

Perhaps the most salient result or outgrowth of the total Pathways Project was the increased awareness of the need to create some new positions within the Instructional Services Area of the University and shift the "right" people into these "right" positions. Among the newly proposed positions are:

- An Associate Vice President for Business and Industry Partnerships
- A Dean of Retention
- A Director of Grants
- An Assistant Dean for each Division

The need for these positions was a significant factor contributing to the reorganizational efforts in the Instructional Services Area that are occurring as this document is being prepared. Because of funding limitations for the 1996-97 fiscal year, released time could not be provided again for faculty. This lack of time and financial resources has further exacerbated the need for the reorganization to occur, and soon.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate how significant change in an institution can result from one simple initiative. Two years ago, the President of the University asked the deans how he could help them become more effective leaders. From that request came the proposal to send 19 deans and department chairs to the same type of conference that you are attending today. The results described above are all a direct result of that initiative. Since that first trip to the Fourth Annual International Conference for Chairs, Deans, and other Organizational Leaders, the University has sent a total of 15 more participants to this annual event. Although sometimes a controversial decision in the face of declining financial resources, the benefits to the institution have far exceeded the costs.